

OBO GUIDING PRINCIPLES**Mission & Vision**

To provide professional support and build capacity with Columbia's small business community.

Mandate

To lead the effort to eliminate economic disparity and thereby create access and equity.

Guiding Principles

To be proactive, accountable, collaborative, responsive, and accommodative.

Values

Provide a high level of dedication, activity, drive, determination, and a positive attitude. Desire to improve, learn, adopt, and exhibit selfless service.

Customer Core Values

To exceed our customer expectations and respect their needs. To share customer goals and objectives, helping them get to the next level. To build strategic relationships with business partners.

Best Business Practices

Make timely and effective business decisions. Operate with highest proficiency.

Valuing our Employees

Demonstrate respect for employees daily. Provide continuous professional development opportunities. Empower employees to act decisively to create and implement improved processes and business services.

**Importance of a Business Plan**

A business plan is simply a resume for your business. It is significant, because it states who you are and what you represent. When you meet with potential lenders, creditors, or investors, your business plan should be present.

In most cases, a business plan is created to explain and illustrate the vision you have for your business, and to persuade others to help you achieve that vision. To accomplish this, your plan will need to demonstrate on paper that you have a firm visualization of what your business is going to be. It needs to convince others that your business concept can be successful and that you possess the expertise-alone or collectively-to assure that it will be successful, profitable, and withstand longevity.

While it is obviously important to be able to present your business concept in a way that allows others to understand quickly and precisely what you hope to be doing, you also need to develop a business plan for your own use. The process of developing your business plan will require you to focus on exactly what you are trying to achieve, precisely where you want to be going, and exactly how you plan to get there.

There are basically two types of business plans. Both business plans are designed to help you develop your new business from conceptualization to opening day.

Concept Presentation Plan

Concept Presentation Plans are typically 10 to 24 pages long, and basically describe your business concept, products, principals (owners and key management), target market, trends in the industry, etc. This type of plan contains no financial projections or financial statements. Its primary purpose is to convince landlords and property managers that you have a sound and appealing business concept, and that you are interested in negotiating for the lease of an available space.

Full Financial Business Plan

Typically, you will need a Full Financial Business Plan to borrow money from a bank, or to entice investors to lend you money. Depending upon the contents, it can consist of anywhere from 25 to 100 pages of information. It can contain all the elements of the concept presentation plan, but primarily it examines in-depth what the total costs of your project will be, when the project will turn a profit, and what level of return you can expect.

Article published by Beans Business Basics.

A net 66 percent of Americans think that small business "exerts a positive influence on the way things are going in the country today."

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DIRECTOR'S CORNER

By Tony Lawton

In this issue of Columbia Opportunities On-Line, the Office of Business Opportunities showcases the impact of several programs dedicated to improving the economic climate for Columbia's small businesses.

The **Business In Motion** program is an ongoing, cooperative economic development effort focused on retaining and helping businesses expand in the City.

With programs such as the **Sub-contracting Outreach** and the **Mentor Protégé Programs** full and equitable opportunities are provided to small businesses. Additionally, these programs have proven to motivate and encourage prime contractors and firms to provide mutually beneficial development assistance for all segments of the small business community. Businesses located within the City of Columbia's Empowerment Zone can take advantage of over \$22 million dollars in federal **Tax Credits and Incentives**. The tax credits and incentives can be taken against federal taxes for individuals who live and/or work in the EZ and businesses within the EZ.

Through **Small Business Loan Programs** the economic climate is stimulated through the creation and retention of job, and private lender participation. And by way of the **Business Spotlight Program** and **Retail/Commercial Development**, the OBO encourages and increases the businesses' visibility and viability, therefore improving the businesses economic status.

The City of Columbia continues its effort to become an Entrepreneurial City and to grow Columbia's business to the next level. At the Office of Business Opportunities we encourage businesses to take advantage of the many benefits available by the City through our office.

Columbia Opportunities On-Line

Small Business Loan Program

The OBO Business Loan Programs provide a way to retain businesses in Columbia and to ensure that Columbia residents continue to keep their jobs and also provide opportunities for new jobs. This along with the Tax Credits and Incentives have been a tremendous benefit to Columbia businesses.

This Fiscal Year (2007-08) the OBO has awarded over \$852,000 to Columbia businesses. Through the OBO Loan Programs we have created forty-five jobs over the past two years, and are expecting more jobs to be created from the loans that were awarded most recently, which will increase the number to nearly 60 jobs by the end of the year.

The OBO offers three quality loan programs:

	Maximum Amount	Repayment Terms
Small Business Financing Fund	\$100,000	Up to 25 years
Business Incentive Fund	1/3 of Project Cost	Up to 25 years
Commercial Rev Loan Fund	\$ 200,000	Up to 25 years

Now that you have some of the facts on the OBO Business Loan Program, we suggest that you call, email or write us soon. Contact Josephus Howard at (803) 545-3957 to learn more. **Let's do business!**

City of Columbia Unveils Business in Motion Program

On March 17, 2008 the City of Columbia in partnership with the Greater Columbia Chamber of Commerce unveiled Columbia's "Business in Motion" Program. The Office of Economic Development, Office of Business Opportunities, and the Greater Columbia Chamber of Columbia is working closely together to improve the area's business climate and increase the competitiveness of our region as a whole.



The purpose of the Business In Motion program is to demonstrate our appreciation for local companies by providing a higher level of customer service and helping them attain the resources and services they need to stay and continue to grow in Columbia. We are fully committed to serving our business community, and we are proactively engaging local companies to look for ways to assist them. We would like to invite all of our local businesses to participate in this program and help us make Columbia a better place to live and work. For more information on the Business In Motion program and to find out how you can help shape the future of Columbia, contact Ryan Coleman at (803) 545-3954.



The City of Columbia's Office of Business Opportunities Received the Public Sector Award for 2008 from IMARA Woman Magazine

Pictured left to right:

Tony Lawton, Councilman E.W. Cromartie, Wendy and Paul Brawley, and Angelo McBride.

City of Columbia's Sub-Contracting Outreach Program Continues to Provide Equitable Opportunities

The Subcontracting Outreach Program continues to thrive in the areas of Water, Sewer, Storm Drain and Capital Improvement projects. Utilization of the OBO's directory of Sub-Contractors has played a pivotal role in General Contractors contracting with the growing number of Sub-Contractors in the City and surrounding areas on City of Columbia projects. The OBO has successfully built a network of contractors, and to-date our directory consists of eighty-three (83) contractors and is growing daily. From the last four City projects alone, subcontractors assisted through the Subcontracting Outreach Program were able to contract \$1,313,293.44 from General Contractors who received awards this reporting period.

***This amount does not include minority contractors that were awarded bids that were not on our list at that time of the awards.*



Before the completion of the Disparity Study the City historically experienced a 3 – 4% participation of MBE/WBE subcontractors. During the last reporting period, the MBE/WBE participation was \$5,021,646 or approximately 14.2% of total contracts. After the adoption of the Subcontracting Outreach Program and the completion of the Disparity Study the City has made significant gains in this area. The OBO continues to monitor the progress and successes of the Sub-contractors involved in projects throughout the City.

The OBO will be offering Subcontractor Outreach Workshops throughout the year that benefit the Subcontractors and the General Contractors. The workshop will provide a forum in which those parties with interest in the program can communicate, network and gain understanding of the requirements of the program. The workshops are ongoing to ensure that the City of Columbia is doing all that it can to build capacity for the subcontractors.

Mentor Protégé Program Encourages Partnership among Local Businesses

The Mentor Protégé PILOT Program, the first-of-its-kind for the City of Columbia, teams prospering companies that have proven competencies in business, technology and the development of sophisticated business solutions with smaller, emerging small businesses (Protégé) Protégés will gain the tools and techniques to improve their operations, create valuable business alliances and accelerate growth, and established companies (Mentor) find new opportunities, partners and markets. Which in return will increase the odds for success for both companies.

Mentor-Protégé team identifies strategies for accelerating growth, securing necessary resources and entering target markets. At the end of the cycle, Protégés exit the program and are empowered to grow and thrive.

In addition to the guidance provided by the Mentors, Protégé companies can take advantage of a network of technical assistance and training providers who focus on building capacity and providing access to capital.

The program begins with a competitive application and review process. Protégé companies are evaluated to determine the most critical areas for improvement and then matched with Mentor companies possessing the expertise, resources and leadership to best guide their success. During the program, the

Small Business Fact

More than 80% of small businesses use some sort of financing to grow their business.

Credit lines, loans, capital leases	55.0%	Business credit cards	34.1%	Personal credit cards	46.0 %
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Source: SBA "Small Business by the Numbers" 2004.

OBO Continues to Connect to the Small Business Community

A number of local businesses have been recognized by the City of Columbia for the outstanding contributions they make in the community and the effort they have made to improve the economic climate in our Capital City.

The Business Spotlight program provides an opportunity for the City to acknowledge and praise the efforts and achievements of the City's small business community and to encourage entrepreneurship throughout the city. Since its inception, the Business Spotlight program has successfully recognized six local businesses and has proven to be a vital instrument in connecting local government to the small business community.

To nominate a business for the Business Spotlight Program, contact Sergio Aparicio at (803) 545-3336 or Felicia Maloney at (803) 545-3955.



Pictured left to right: Mayor Bob Coble, Councilwoman Anne Sinclair, and Elaine Gillespie of the Gillespie Agency.

The Gillespie Agency

Business Spotlight of the Month February 2008

Congratulations to the Gillespie Agency, which was recognized on February 20, 2008, as the fourth honoree in the Business Spotlight Program.

The Gillespie Agency, based in Columbia, SC is a full service advertising, media, and public relations firm which has been named the Midlands of South Carolina's second largest according to The State Newspaper. The agency provides marketing services for a diverse group of clients. They believe in providing on-target, quality advertising.

The employees value community service and they have an outstanding reputation for producing positive sales results for their clients. In 2003, The Gillespie Agency was one of the only three companies in South Carolina to be certified by the National Women Business Owners Corporation. They are also certified as a minority-owned business by the State of South Carolina's Governor's Office of Small and Minority Business Assistance. The Gillespie Agency is located at 3007 Millwood Avenue. Visit them on the web at www.thegillespieagency.com.



CW 47

Business Spotlight of the Month March 2008

Congratulations to CW 47, which was recognized on March 19, 2008 as the fifth honoree in the Business Spotlight Program.

CW 47 is a television broadcasting station based in Columbia, SC and well known for their hit TV shows and community involvement as well as their advertising of local businesses here in Columbia. CW 47 embraces diversity through hiring employees from a wide range of cultures and working with organizations in the community which support various causes. They participate in career fairs at elementary and middle schools as well as the USC and SCBA Job Fairs.

CW 47 works with Project Unity, the United Way of the Midlands, the March of Dimes, the Ad Council and many other non-profit organizations through the use of public service air time. CW 47 staff also plays an active role in the community through partnerships with The IMARA Woman Magazine, The Greater Columbia Chamber of Commerce, Hispanic Connections, Inc., The Columbia Classical Ballet, The Auntie Karen Foundation and several others. CW 47 is located at 1747 Cushman Drive. Visit them on the web at www.CW47columbia.com.



Columbia Empowerment Zone Continues to Foster Economic Opportunities through Job Training Partnerships

The City of Columbia in an effort to increase employment opportunities for the residents of the Empowerment Zone, has partnered with the Columbia Housing Authority Development, Inc., to assist with the implementation of the "RETAIL" program. The Retail, Employment Training Aim at Influencing Lives project is a retail management/employee training program for the HOPE VI Celia Saxon Commercial Development site. The program will create employment and educational for residents of the Celia Saxon, and serve as a catalyst to empower

and generate community among the residents. The City of Columbia Empowerment Zone is excited about the RETAIL program and the benefits it will offer for the residents of the Celia Saxon residents.

For more information on the RETAIL Program call the Columbia Housing Authority at (803) 376-5047.

This Quarter's Q&A Business Tip

Q: Are there any employer incentives for hiring employees who work in an Empowerment Zone (EZ)?

A: Yes. The EZ Wage Credit, Work Opportunity Tax Credit, Welfare to Work Credit The tax code allows employers a credit against Federal taxes for hiring and retaining employees who live and work in an EZ. The **EZ Wage Credit** provides businesses located in the EZ a credit against Federal taxes of up to \$3,000 for every employee who both lives and works within the EZ. The **Work Opportunity Credits** provides a credit of up to \$2,400 against Federal taxes to businesses for each new hire from groups that have high unemployment rates or other special employment needs, including youth ages 18 to 24 and summer hires ages 16 to 17 who live within the EZ. The **Welfare to Work Credit** is a two-year credit against federal taxes for businesses that hire long-term family assistance recipients and provides up to \$3,500 for the first year and up to \$5,000 for the second year to each new hire.



Pictured left to right: Dody Yarborough of CW47, Mayor Bob Coble, and Councilman Daniel Rickenmann.

Upcoming Events

May 29, 2008

Columbia EZ Board Meeting
Contact: Angelo McBride
(803) 545-3960

June 5, 2008

Sumter-Columbia EZ Joint
Board Meetings
Contact: Angelo McBride
(803) 545-3960

June 19, 2008

FastTrac GrowthVenture
Contact: Felicia Maloney
(803) 545-3955

June 25, 2008

Make-Me-A-Match Forum
Contact: Sergio Aparicio
(803) 545-3336

Coming Soon!

EZ Tax Incentives and
Credits Workshop
Contact: Josephus Howard
(803) 545-3957

How to Do Business with the
City Workshop
Contact: Oscar Walker
(803) 545-3962

OBO Recruiting Businesses for Retail Space and Commercial Development

Are You a Business Owner Looking for Retail or Office Space in a Prime Location in the City of Columbia? The Office of Business Opportunities has retail and office space available in the North Main Street Plaza. We also have available commercial sites in North Columbia, suitable for medium to small scale development. City owned properties and fast-track permitting makes development quick, easy and affordable.

Contact Felicia Maloney at (803) 545-3955 for more information.

Call Now to Reserve Your Space!



North Main Plaza
3901 North Main Street

Developable Sites • New Construction • Prime Location • EZ Facility Bonds
Tax/Credit Incentives • Attractive Loan Program

Want to Know How to do Business with the City of Columbia?

Are you a small business who wants to partner with the City of Columbia? Or a General Contractor? Sub-Contractor or Supplier with trade lines in Water, Sewer, Storm Drain or Capital Improvement? If the answer is YES...the City of Columbia's "**How to Do Business with the City of Columbia**" workshops or "**Make-Me-A-Match**" forum may be the answer for your business. To register with the OBO and receive notification of upcoming workshops, forums or training events call the Office of Business Opportunities (803) 545-3950 or contact the City of Columbia's Purchasing Division at (803) 545-3470.



City of Columbia
Office of Business Opportunities
1612 Bull Street
Columbia, South Carolina 29217

Register Now!
FastTrac Growth
Venture

Session Begins
June 19, 2008

For More Info:
(803) 545-3955